

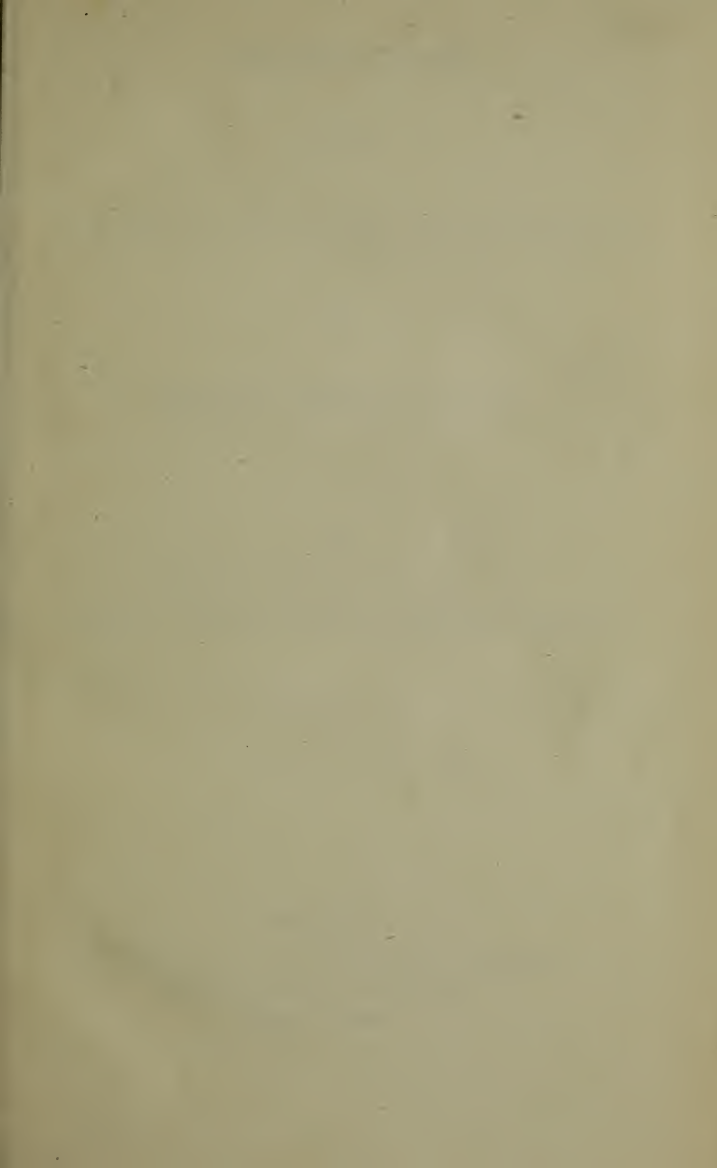
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SKETCHES  
OF THE  
THEOLOGICAL HISTORY  
OF  
NEW ENGLAND.

BY  
ENOCH POND, D. D.,  
PROFESSOR EMERITUS, THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BANGOR.

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## PREFACE.



The substance of the following pages was written almost thirty years ago, and published in successive numbers in the "Congregationalist." Since that time, I have been repeatedly solicited by ministerial brethren to revise those Numbers, and publish them in a book; but I have had no time for it, until the last autumn. The whole has now been re-written, and considerably altered and enlarged.

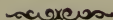
The theology of which I have written is chiefly Congregational, as this was the parent theology of New England; and it is this with which I have been most intimately acquainted. I became a Congregational minister of New England sixty-five years ago, and (until a few of the last years) have been in active service ever since. I have been placed, for most of the time, in situations to make me acquainted with the different phases of Congregational theology in my native land. I deem it of great importance that these should be known and remembered; and that they may be, they must be garnered up. They are rapidly passing out of the knowledge of the present generation, and, unless put upon the printed page, will soon be gone.

In sketching the history of my own denomination, and of others which have arisen, I have endeavored that my statements should be fair and truthful, and not of a nature to give needless offence. Never was there a nobler band of Christian men and women than the first settlers of New England. Yet they fell into some errors, and made some mistakes,—mistakes which might have been fatal to their enterprise, had not God arrested the natural course of them by the outpouring of his Spirit. Let us endeavor to profit by their mistakes, as well as by their noble example; and let us seek our security at all times, in the favor and blessing of our covenant God.

March, 1880.



# CONTENTS.



## CHAPTER I.

FAITH AND ARDOR OF THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS OF NEW ENGLAND. ERROR OF MRS. HUTCHINSON. . . . Page 7.

## CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS DECLENSION. EXPEDIENTS TO REMEDY IT. THE HALF-WAY COVENANT. RELAXING THE TERMS OF COMMUNION. . . . Page 14.

## CHAPTER III.

THE GREAT REVIVAL, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES. . . Page 22.

## CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF EDWARDS AND HIS FOLLOWERS. IMPROVEMENTS IN THEOLOGY. . . . Page 31.

## CHAPTER V.

IMPROVEMENTS OF EDWARDS AND HIS FOLLOWERS. . . Page 40.

## CHAPTER VI.

THEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS IN NEW ENGLAND. INTRODUCTION OF UNITARIANISM. . . . .	Page 49.
--	----------

## CHAPTER VII.

UNION OF HOPKINSIANS AND CALVINISTS, AND ITS RESULTS. THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY. . . . .	Page 55.
--	----------

## CHAPTER VIII.

NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY. WHAT IS IT? IMPORTANCE OF UNION. . . . .	Page 60.
---	----------

## CHAPTER IX.

VINDICATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY. CONCLUDING REMARKS. . . . .	Page 70.
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## CHAPTER X.

SKETCHES OF OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN NEW ENG- LAND. . . . .	Page 78.
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# SKETCHES OF THE THEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF NEW ENGLAND.

## CHAPTER I.

FAITH AND ORDER OF THE ORIGINAL SETTLERS.—  
ERROR OF MR. HUTCHINSON.

WITH regard to the religious principles of the first settlers of New England, there is, happily, no room for doubts. In doctrine, they were Calvinists of the old school ; in point of ecclesiastical order and government, they were Congregationalists ; while, in the discipline of their churches, they were strict and faithful, after the pattern of the apostles and primitive believers.

They adopted the "Westminster Confession of Faith" almost as soon as it was published, in the year 1648, judging it "to be very holy, orthodox, and judicious," in respect to doctrine. They re-affirmed the same, with slight modifications, under

the title of "The New England Confession of Faith." This, surely, is proof enough of their Calvinism.

Their Congregationalism is equally unquestionable. Our fathers did not all come to this country with the same settled views in regard to church organization, or holding precisely the same ecclesiastical relations. The settlers at Plymouth had fully separated from the Church of England, and matured their principles of church order and government, years before they left their native land; while most of those who settled the other colonies, though known in England as Puritans and Non-conformists, did not formally withdraw from the English church, until after their arrival in this country.\* But though there had been no agreement among them, or so much as a comparison of views, with regard to this subject, previous to the settlement of the several colonies, it is remarkable that they soon found themselves in almost perfect harmony. The principles of Robinson and of the Plymouth settlers were generally embraced by those who came after them, and they settled down together on the ground of *Congregationalism*. We have sufficient proof of this in the

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\*This was one ground of the difficulty with Roger Williams. He was a rigid Separatist, and he refused to have communion with the church in Boston, "because they would not make a public declaration of their repentance for holding communion with the Church of England, while they lived there. (See Hubbard's History, p. 203.) The controversies of our fathers with Roger Williams were not greatly of a doctrinal nature. They related more to questions of discipline and practice.

adoption of the Cambridge Platform, by the Synod of 1648. This constituted them, not Brownists, but *Congregationalists*, guarding the rights and the independence of the individual churches, so far as jurisdiction is concerned, while it provides for the communion and fellowship of the churches, and their responsibility one to another.\*

I have said that the first settlers of New England were strict in their church discipline. They strictly examined those who proposed to come into their churches, and admitted none who did not witness a good confession. They also watched over such as were received, and if any erred from the faith, or were chargeable with scandalous offences, they were either recovered by repentance and confession, or were excluded.

In this particular, our churches differed as much from most of the churches of Europe, as they did in their ecclesiastical organization. Throughout Christian Europe, both Romish and Reformed, the practice was to baptize all in infancy, and to consider them as church members, unless excommunicated. In childhood, they were to be taught certain forms of faith and worship, after

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\*The subject of modifying the original Congregationalism of New England by a consociation of the churches, in a way to restrict somewhat their individual independency, has been repeatedly up for discussion in Massachusetts; first, in the years 1704—6; then, in 1815; and lastly, in 1846; but the proposed changes have not found favor with the churches. Their independency is one of the last things which they will be likely to surrender. By adopting the Saybrook Articles, the churches in Connecticut became consociate in the year 1708.

which they were admitted to the Lord's Table, having received confirmation from the bishop, where there were bishops, or having passed through an examination in the creed and catechism, where the government was Presbyterian.

The New England Puritans could not walk in these ways. They believed that when a man is born again, a change is wrought in him of which it is possible for him, and for others, to find evidence; that the regenerate differ from the unregenerate in the possession of some substantial good qualities which must show themselves in thought, feeling and conduct; and they felt bound to treat all as unregenerate, in whom, on examination, no evidence of Christian piety could be found.

This system of judging and of administering the ordinances laid the foundation for whatever is really characteristic in the New England style of preaching. The preacher had before him, from Sabbath to Sabbath, a considerable number of hearers, who were not regarded as converted persons, who were rather regarded, both by themselves and the church, as unrenewed, impenitent men, destitute of faith and of every Christian grace, in the broad road to perdition. "Hence, impenitence, unbelief, enmity to God, and whatever else is involved in a state of sin, not only might be, but in all faithfulness should be, charged home upon such persons. Hence, the New Eng-



land habit of assailing hearers with both argument and entreaty, to bring them over from opposition to friendship, from unbelief to faith.”\*

The first marked departure from the faith of the New England churches occurred in the year 1636, under the auspices of a Mrs. Hutchinson, and her brother-in-law, Mr. Wheelwright. These persons and their followers were *Antinomian Perfectionists*. Mrs. H. is described as “a gentlewoman of nimble wit, and voluble tongue, of eminent knowledge in the Scriptures, great charity, and notable helpfulness, in cases of need, among her own sex.” She made pretensions to the highest attainment in religion, was full of love, and “had much to say about exalting free grace, depressing the creature, and leaving all for Christ and the Spirit to perform.”† There can be no doubt that she was a very imposing religionist, who had much influence with Gov. Vane, and, for a time, with Mr. Cotton, himself. By her zeal and address, she brought no small part of the Boston church to sympathize with her in her peculiar views. She taught, among other things, that justification is not evidenced to the subject of it by sanctification, but by direct impression or revelation; and that between the justified person and the Holy

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\*See Tracy's Great Awakening, pp. 2, 3.

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†Hubbard says that “under pretence of crying up of the grace of God in the work of man's salvation, she and her people had well nigh cashiered all the grace of God out of their hearts, endeavoring to ullify the grace of sanctification, that they might the more exalt the grace of justification.” History of New England, p. 253.

Ghost there is found, at once, a perfect union. The Divine Spirit dwells in such an one personally, is one with him, and henceforth he is as incapable of sinning as the Holy Ghost.

Like most other fanatics, Mrs. H. and her followers depreciated *the letter* of Scripture that they might exalt its spirit. "The letter," they said, "held forth nought but a covenant of works, and we must look to the spirit for the covenant of grace." Some of her followers insisted that "Christ himself is a part of the new creature"; and one went so far as to maintain, in a public assembly, that "Christ and the new creature are personally one." From extravagances such as these, others of a like nature were evolved; as that "believers are not holden to obey the Divine law," "the Sabbath is the same as other days," "the soul is not immortal till it becomes united to Christ," "the final doom of the wicked is annihilation," "there is to be no resurrection of the body," &c. Erroneous opinions hung together in those days just as they do now.

To dismiss these opinions, and, if possible, to suppress them, a Synod was convened at Boston, in the year 1637, of which the famous Mr. Hooker, of Hartford, was moderator. The effort of these discussions was, to draw out the errors of those who had wandered, bring them into light, and show their unreasonableness, that so the innocent might be recovered, and obstinate offend-

ers might be convicted. In the issue, many acknowledged themselves to have been deceived, and penitently returned to the right ways of the Lord. Mrs. H. herself was excommunicated, and ordered to remove beyond the bounds of the colony. She went first to Rhode Island, and joined herself to the company of Roger Williams. But not finding congenial spirits there, she removed farther into the wilderness, where she finally perished by the hands of the Indians.

With all their wisdom, and after all their trials in the mother country, our fathers did not understand the true principles of religious liberty. They did well, so far as I see, in excommunicating Mrs. H., but not—unless she had been convicted of crime—in banishing her. She should have been allowed to remain, and retain her civil rights. But our fathers thought differently. Having traveled so far, and suffered so much, to find security for themselves and their opinions, they felt that they had a right to enjoy them undisturbed. The deluded wanderer and deceiver should have no part with them. She should be compelled to seek a home in some other quarter.

## CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS DECLENSION.—EXPEDIENTS TO REMEDY IT.—THE HALF-WAY COVENANT.—RELAXING THE TERMS OF COMMUNION.

THE most palpable error which prevailed in the churches of New England was more directly practical than doctrinal ; and yet it indicated some deviation from doctrinal purity, and led on to greater and more disastrous issues. I refer to the practice of baptizing children on what was called the half-way covenant. The immediate occasion of this innovation was as follows :

As years rolled on, and the early settlers passed away, and the population of the country increased, there grew up a serious discussion on the matter of vital religion. The consequence was, that many of those who had been baptized in infancy, and who, their fathers had hoped, would be early converted, and become pillars in the church of Christ, were unprepared and unwilling to make a public profession of their faith. They were, in general,

persons of sober life, and attended upon the means of grace, but gave no decisive evidence of piety. Of course, they could not conscientiously ask for admission to the church, or, if they had asked, could they have been received, consequently, their children were not baptized, and were likely to grow up, like the heathen, without the seal of the covenant, or so much as a nominal connection with the church of Christ.

In this painful emergency, what was to be done? Would it be right or safe to innovate on the established order of the churches, and admit persons to communion without a credible profession of piety? Or, was it safe to shut their posterity entirely away from the church, deprive them of Christian ordinances, and thus leave the cherished vine which, at so great a sacrifice, they had planted in the wilderness, to the hazard of being wasted, if not destroyed? These trying questions were first started in Connecticut, and we can hardly conceive of the feeling and interest with which they soon forced themselves upon the attention of the churches. They were discussed and decided at a meeting of ministers in Boston, in 1657. They were decided in a general Synod in 1662. In these decisions, which were substantially the same, the difficulty was rather evaded than removed. It was not determined that those who gave no evidence of piety should be admitted to the communion of the church, nor was it de-

terminated that they could hold no sort of connection with the church, and consequently that children must remain unbaptized. A middle course was suggested and adopted, viz. : " That it is the duty of those who were baptized in infancy, when grown up to years of discretion, though not yet fit for the Lord's Table, to *own the covenant* made in their behalf by their parents, by entering thereinto in their own persons ; and it is the duty of the church to call upon them for the performance thereof. And if, being called upon, they shall neglect the performance of this great duty, or otherwise continue scandalous, they are liable to be censured for the same by the church ; but in case they understand the grounds of religion, and are not scandalous, and solemnly *own the covenant* in their own persons, wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them, we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children.\*

Such was the origin of infant baptism and what has been called the half-way covenant. It was sanctioned by a Synod, was recommended by the General Court, and much learned labor was expended in giving it currency ; and yet some of the best ministers were afraid of it, and the churches in general were slow to adopt it. Nor do we wonder at this. For in pressing a religious duty

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\*See Mather's *Magnalia*. Book V.



to be performed by the unregenerate, *as such*, knowing and confessing themselves to be such, and expecting to continue such, this practice certainly had a very suspicious theological bearing. It seemed to say that the unrenewed man, though in some sense "dead in trespasses and sin," may yet perform some duty in his unregenerate state — something which God will be pleased to accept. The first promoters of the practice may not have so understood it; they may have protested against any such conclusion; and yet they could not prevent the inference which would naturally be drawn. They *did not* prevent its being drawn, For we hear one of the later defenders of the practice saying expressly: "I believe that the obedience of the unrenewed man, so far forth as it is obedience, is as holy as any that a gracious man can yield. Though it is but a partial and imperfect obedience, yet just as much as there is of obedience, just so much holiness."\*

There can be no doubt that this practice was of bad influence, both upon the individuals adopting it, and upon the church. It tended to quiet the consciences of impenitent men, and nurture a feeling of false security. When they had owned the covenant, and obtained baptism for their children, they felt, not indeed that they had done all that God required of them, but they had done something, they had taken one good step, and

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\*See Bellamy's Works. Vol. 1, p. 65.

were not the sinners which they were before. God looked upon them with less abhorrance, if not with positive complacence ; and with such impressions on their minds they would be little likely to come to repentance and the knowledge of the truth.

The practical effect of this measure upon the church was just what might have been expected. Most people of sober life when they came to have families, owned the covenant and presented their children for baptism. But the number of church members in full communion was small, and was constantly diminishing. The church, therefore, was still in danger. Baptism was administered to great numbers, while the Lord's Supper — the other special ordinance of the gospel — was falling into comparative neglect. While persons undertake to split the difference between holiness and sin, and pursue a kind of middle course, they are very sure to come up on the wrong side.

In these trying and difficult circumstances, another innovation was attempted, which, indeed, had been talked of long before. It was now alleged that the covenant of the Lord's Supper is among the appointed means of regeneration ; that it is the duty of unconverted persons, regarding themselves as such, to come to this ordinance ; and, consequently, that a profession of piety should not be required of those who offer themselves for communion in the church. This doc-



trine was first advocated by the founders of the Brattle Street church in Boston. It had a more strenuous advocate, soon after, in the person of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton. In a sermon published by Mr. Stoddard, in the year 1707, he undertook to prove, first, that "sanctification is not a necessary qualification for partaking of the Lord's Supper," and, secondly, that "the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance." To this sermon, the venerable Increase Mather, of Boston, published a reply; and to his reply, Mr. Stoddard published a rejoinder.

"Mr. Stoddard's principle," says Hopkins, in his *Life of Edwards*, "at first made a great noise in the country, and he was opposed as introducing something contrary to the principles and practice of almost all the churches in New England. However, through his great influence over the people in Northampton, the practice was introduced there, and by degrees it spread very much among the people in that county, and in other parts of New England."\*

The operation of this practice upon the churches was most disastrous. It tended to increase the number of communicants, but to depress and weaken the vital energies of the body as a whole. It was well said by the great Dr. Owen, that "the letting go of this principle, that particular churches ought to consist of regenerate persons,

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\*See *Edwards' Works*. Vol. I, p. 65.

brought in the great apostacy of the church.\* There can be no doubt but the letting go of this principle in New England, in connection with other causes, went directly to prepare the way for a great apostacy here. The churches came to consist very considerably, in many places, of unconverted persons — of those who regarded themselves as unconverted, and who came to the Lord's Table as a means of regeneration.\*

And when the door was once opened for persons without piety to enter the church, there was no hindrance to their entering the ministry; and between the years 1680 and 1740—50, it may be proved that many of this description did enter the ministry. They were grave men, in speculation orthodox, or moderately so, and performed their customary ministerial duties with much regularity; but their preaching was without point, earnestness, and application; their devotional services lacked warmth and unction; their labors were not blessed of the Holy Spirit; their people slumbered; the tone of religious sentiment and feeling was declining; and true godliness seemed fast retiring from the soul.

The religious declension now in progress was

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\*The effect of Mr. Stoddard's principle was well illustrated in an occurrence recorded by Mr. Prince, of the Old South Church in Boston. At the time of the great earthquake, in 1727, "people were much frightened, and many were awakened to such a sense of their duty, as to offer themselves to our communion. Very few came to me under deep convictions of their unconverted and lost condition, or with the inquiry, What shall we do to be saved? but rather to signify that they had such a sense of their duty to come to the Lord's Table, that they could not stay away any longer." Chris. History. Vol. II., p. 381.

both doctrinal and practical. Much alarm was expressed by the best ministers on account of the progress of Pelagianism and Arminianism. And no wonder. The practice of the church for half a century had directly tended to foster these errors, and the wonder is that they had not shown themselves more conspicuously, and at an earlier period. A depreciation of morals was also complained of, and frequent attempts were made to promote a reformation;\* but the means adopted did not reach the seat of the disease, which continued to rage with increasing violence. So alarming had this declension become in the days of Cotton Mather, as to lead him to declare that "in forty years more, should it continue to make progress as it had done, convulsions would ensue, and churches would be gathered out of churches." In less than forty years, this prediction began to be fulfilled by the Separatists. It has had a more signal accomplishment in the present century.

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\*The Reforming Synod, so called, assembled at Boston in the autumn of 1679.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE GREAT REVIVAL, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

It was in the midst of the declensions above described, that the great and powerful revivals of religion, which occurred near the middle of the last century, commenced. There had been instances of revival before, in different parts of the country, but they were becoming infrequent, and were scarcely known. But in 1734, a new era began to open. The work of God commenced in Northampton, under the searching and powerful ministry of Mr. Edwards. Here it continued and prevailed, "till there was scarcely a person in the town, either old or young, that was left unconcerned about the things in the eternal world." In the spring of the next year, it extended into the surrounding country, and nearly all the towns in old Hampshire county were visited and revived. It also prevailed in different parts of Connecticut and New Jersey.

In 1738, Mr. Whitefield first visited this country. He commenced his labors in the Southern Provinces, and did not visit New England until the autumn of 1740. During his first visit, his labors in Boston and in other places were followed by a very unusual and general attention to religion. "Multitudes were greatly affected, and many awakened, under his lively ministry. Great numbers in Boston," says Mr. Prince, "were so happily concerned about their souls, as we had never seen anything like it before." In the winter following, Mr. Gilbert Tennent came into New England, where his labors were abundant, and were greatly blessed. The revival in Boston exceeded anything ever before witnessed in the country. "The very face of the town seemed to be changed, so as to occasion great surprise to those who visited it." From Boston the work spread in every direction over the settled portions of New England.

It was the fate of this revival, as of such awakenings, generally, to encounter opposition. It was opposed, not only by the scoffer and infidel, but by many in the churches, and by not a few of the ministers. Considering the state of things in the churches when the work commenced, this result was to have been expected. It could hardly have been otherwise. For in these rousing, revival scenes, religion was presented in a new and glowing aspect. It was exhibited, not as mere form,

but as feeling, as substance ; not as a matter of cold speculation, affecting the head only, but as reaching, stirring, warming, refreshing all the affections of the soul. Many, therefore, in the churches, and in the ministry, felt themselves reproved and condemned by these new exhibitions of religion. They saw and felt that if this was religion, they had none of it. They had themselves experienced no such thing. They knew nothing about such glowing, heart religion as this. They were constrained, therefore, either to renounce their hope, and take the humbling attitude of inquirers and learners, or to condemn and oppose the revival as mere frenzy and delusion. Some, to be sure, both ministers and church members, were induced to take the former course ; but many were left, as might be expected, to take the latter. They condemned the revival, condemned the fruits of it, and condemned the measures that were taken to promote it, refusing to have any participation in them. They closed their houses of worship against Whitefield and Tennent, and the other revival preachers, and regarded and spoke of the whole work, either as a tumult of the passions, or as the delusion of an evil spirit.

The effect of this bitter opposition upon the friends and promoters of the revival was, in many instances, unhappy. Instead of making them more humble and watchful, more suspicious of themselves, and more prayerfully dependent on

the Lord, it wounded the pride of some, enkindled their resentment, induced them to render railing for railing, and put them upon the adoption of new and exceptionable measures to carry on the work. In this way, their wily opponents attained a prodigious advantage over them; and they pushed it to the utmost of their power. Still more, therefore were some of the professed friends of the revival exasperated, and the sound of contention waxed louder and louder.

In this state of things, it was impossible for persons of tried wisdom, and humble, devoted piety to speak, so as to make themselves heard and regarded. The excellent Mr. Edwards did what he could. He preached and published his sermon on "The Trial of the Spirits." He also published his "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England,"—a work which can not be too highly esteemed, and which was productive of immediate good, both in this country and in Scotland. But to accomplish all that he intended and hoped, it was too late. Contention and confusion extensively prevailed, and the Holy Spirit was in good measure grieved away.

Looking back on this season of revival, at the distance now of two centuries, we come to the same conclusion with the judicious Edwards who lived at the time and in the midst of it. It was undoubtedly a great and glorious work of God's Holy Spirit, commenced in the midst of deep de-



clension and prevailing for a season with much power, and with the best effects ; but through the unreasonable opposition of unholy men, and the delusions of Satan, and the mistakes of some who were thinking to promote it, becoming at length, corrupted and defaced, and liable, in many respects, to objection and censure.

The results of this great revival were manifest, and in most instances, happy. In the first place, there can be no doubt that a great multitude were truly converted, among whom were many ministers, and candidates for the ministry, and thousands who became living members of the church. The existing churches were not only enlarged, but many new churches were established. In the year 1760, President Styles estimated that not less than one hundred and fifty Congregational churches had been established in New England in twenty years. In addition to those there had been a large increase of the Baptist churches, the most of which were Calvinistic, and all were evangelical. A large proportion of the New Light or Separatist churches, which withdrew from the old Congregational establishments, or by persecution were driven out, became Baptists. This was almost the commencement of Baptist prosperity in New England.

In consequence of the revival, an increased attention was given to the education of faithful ministers, and to the founding of institutions having



this object in view. Two of our most distinguished colleges, viz., Nassua Hall and Dartmouth College, may be said to have grown directly out of the revival, and were conducted by its most efficient promoters.

In this outpouring of the Spirit, as in every other, the work of missions was revived. On Long Island, at Stonington, Conn., at Westerly, R. I., and more especially at Kanaumeeek in New York, and Crossweeksung in New Jersey, more was done for the conversion of the Indians than had been done in a century before. The missions at the two last places mentioned, were under the direction of the celebrated David Brainard.

But we are more especially concerned with the theological results of this memorable work of grace. One immediate effect was, a more marked division among the Congregational ministers and churches of New England than had before existed in regard to religious sentiment and feeling. The friends and promoters of the revival were greatly elevated in their views of Divine truth, and of experimental religion. They obtained clearer and more consistent ideas of the great doctrines of grace; felt more of their redeeming power; proclaimed them with much greater plainness, energy, and force; and lived in a nearer conformity to their sanctifying influence.

But to those who discountenanced and opposed the revival, the consequences, theologically, were

directly the reverse. Numbers of this class soon settled down into avowed Arminianism,\* or into a strange and criminal indifference in respect to religious doctrine. If men would but attend upon external observances with a decent formality, and frown upon everything which had the appearance of engagedness and zeal, and think well of their neighbors who were as lifeless as themselves, it was of little consequence what they believed or rejected. They might be Calvinists or Arminians, or almost anything of decent name, without forfeiting their places, or materially affecting their reputation.

Of those who took the course described, the celebrated Dr. Chauncy of the first church in Boston was an eminent example. He was unfriendly to the revival from the first, and in 1743, published his work entitled, "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England," for the purpose of exposing and suppressing it. Perhaps no individual did so much to transform and deface the religious character of Boston and the surrounding country as this man. His intellectual powers were of a high order, his learning various and extensive, his publications numerous, his station commanding, and his life long. He died in 1787, having been pastor of the first church in

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\*The Arminianism spoken of in this connection was very different from that of the Wesleys and their followers. Theirs was warm, vital, and evangelical; this was cold, formal, unreligious sceptical, tending to scepticism and infidelity.

Boston about sixty years. At the close of the revival, he professed himself a Calvinist; but he lived to be not only an Arminian, but an Arian and an advocate of universal salvation.

Another Boston minister of similar views, and whose labors tended in the same direction, was Dr. Mayhew, of the West church. He was not settled until the close of the revival, and he died twenty years previous to Dr. Chauncy. But like him, he opposed the revivalists, and had frequent and bitter controversy with them. He is acknowledged to be one of the New England ministers who denied the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There were not many, perhaps, of the New England clergy who followed Chauncy and Mayhew in all their speculations; for there were not many who possessed an equal share of mental vigor and holiness. But the opposers of the revival in general soon became Arminians; or, if not, their Calvinism was little, if at all, better. It was cold and speculative, without heart or point, and was made to exert no quickening influence. The abuses of the late revival excited and confirmed their prejudices against everything of a like nature. They discouraged warmth and engagedness in religion as "things of a bad tendency," and were afraid of nothing so much as what they called enthusiasm. Innovations in

point of doctrine were considered as of small importance. If people attended public worship on the Sabbath, and paid their taxes, and made no pretensions to unusual seriousness, but sneered and scoffed at those who did, they might expect to be regarded as very good men.

## CHAPTER IV.

INFLUENCE OF EDWARDS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.—  
IMPROVEMENTS IN THEOLOGY.

WE turn now from the opposers of the revival to consider more particularly the influence of those who favored it, and labored in it. Foremost among these were President Edwards and a select few who were trained under his influence. We may consider the influence of these men, first, in restoring the New England Theology to something like its original state; and, secondly, in improving upon this theology, in some of its modes of presentation and defence.

During the times of declension which preceded the revival, though there had been no formal renunciation of Calvinistic doctrines, yet these doctrines, in many instances, had been neglected and corrupted. They were not held and preached as they had been by Hooker, and Shepard, and Norton, and the first generation of New England min-

isters. Now one of the most obvious effects of the revival was, to bring back these doctrines to their place, and present them again with life and power. It could not have been otherwise; for these were the instruments with which the revivalists wrought, in carrying forward this work of grace. Without a vivid exhibition of evangelical doctrines, the revival could never have existed, or been promoted. To apply these remarks to a single case: In the writings of Edwards, and his followers, the nature and appropriate evidence of *regeneration* were clearly exhibited and fully applied. To do this was the principal design of such works as "Edwards on the Affections," and Bellamy's "True Religion Delineated." For years previous to the revival, the idea of *regeneration*, as denoting an instantaneous and ascertainable change, of which the subject could give some rational account, and in reference to which it was proper that he should be examined, had almost disappeared from the public mind. Hence, the good old Puritan practice of examining candidates for the church, and the ministry, had been, to a considerable extent, laid aside. But the effect of the preaching of Edwards and his associates was, to revive this idea, and give it prominence and power. According to Mr. Tracy, this was the *great idea* which lay (under God) at the foundation of the revival, and with which all its phenomena stood connected.

The very term *regeneration*, as now commonly employed, was brought into use during the revival. The older confessions and catechisms do not contain it. They speak of *effectual calling*, which, though it includes regeneration, includes, also, something more. Effectual calling is not a single, instantaneous change, but rather a *process*, including conviction, and spiritual illumination, as well as conversion. In the words of the Shorter Catechism, "it is the work of God's Spirit, whereby *convicting* us of our sin and misery, and *enlightening* our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and *renewing* our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."

It was through the influence of Edwards and his followers, that the baptism of children on the ground of the half-way covenant was laid aside; and that our churches returned to their original practice of receiving members only on a profession of piety. It was his fidelity to truth on this subject which cost Edwards his parish at Northampton. The wholesome *discipline* of the church, which had fallen into great neglect, was, through the same instrumentality, restored, and placed on the footing of the apostles, and the first settlers of New England.

The effect of these measures was to shut out, so far as human means could do it, unconverted men from the churches, and (what is more) to ex-



clude them from the ministry. Those who have not studied our history can hardly realize how great a change the revival accomplished in this respect. Previous to this time, as remarked by Mr. Tracy, "parents felt that they were doing a worthy deed in consecrating their unconverted sons to the ministry, and sending them to college to be prepared for it. The colleges felt that it was their business to take such young men, and prepare them; and to doubt the fitness of those whom they had prepared for the profession seemed an attack both upon their reputation and their income. The extensively prevailing view of regeneration, as a work attended by no ascertainable evidence, discouraged questioning concerning a minister's spiritual state." Accordingly, we hear Mr. Stoddard saying, that "it can not be known certainly who has sanctifying grace, and that a minister who knows himself unregenerate may, nevertheless, lawfully administer baptism and the Lord's Supper." And we hear Dr. Chauncy censuring Whitefield for insisting so much upon piety, as essential to the character of a true minister of Christ. "Conversion," says he, "does not appear to be alike necessary for ministers, in their public capacity, as officers of the church, as in their private life." No person making the slightest pretension to piety would think of writing after this manner now.

Thus far, we have seen Edwards and his follow-



ers endeavoring to *restore* the doctrine and discipline of our churches to the state in which they were at the first settlement of the country. The question now arises, and it is an important one: Did they aim at anything farther than this? Did they make any advances upon the fathers of New England, and introduce any improvements into their theology? That they held the same great doctrines with their fathers, — doctrines which can be no more superseded or shaken than the pillars of heaven, there can be no doubt. It was a part of their mission, as we have seen, to bring back a cold and formal church to the heart-felt acknowledgement of these holy doctrines. But did they stop precisely here? Did they attempt no improvement in a way of statement, explanation, or defence? To say as much as this would be to conflict with historical truth, and with the common apprehensions of New England men.

It is certain that Dr. Hopkins introduced some changes into the theology of the country; else why were his followers called Hopkinsians? And who was Dr. Hopkins? And what was his relation to President Edwards? Hopkins was a favorite pupil of Edwards, to whom the latter entrusted his manuscripts, who wrote his life, and who ever professed to be but a follower out of the principles of his distinguished instructor. The origin of the name Hopkinsian, and the close connection of the first Hopkinsians with Edwards, are thus

set forth by Dr. Hopkins in his autobiography : "In the latter part of the year 1769, Mr. William Hart, of Saybrook, published a dialogue, under the following title : ' Brief Remarks on a Number of False Positions, and Dangerous Errors which are spreading in the country, collected out of Sunday Discourses lately published by Dr. Whitaker and Mr. Hopkins.' Soon after there was a small pamphlet published, which was doubtless written by the same Mr. Hart, in which the doctrines which I, and others who agreed with me, had published, were misrepresented, and set in a ridiculous light ; and with a particular design to disgrace me before the public, he called them Hopkintonian doctrines. This is the origin of the name ; and since that time, all who embrace the Calvinistic doctrines as published by Pres. Edwards, Dr. Bellamy, and myself, have been called Hopkintonians, or Hopkinsians. Thus, without designing it, I am become the head of a denomination, which has since greatly increased, in which thousands are included, and a large number of ministers, who, I believe, are the most sound, consistent, and thorough Calvinists."

In the year 1796, Dr. Hopkins says again : "About forty years ago, there were but few persons, not more than four or five, who espoused the sentiments which have since been called Edwardean, and New Divinity, and later, (after some improvement was made upon them) Hopkinsian

sentiments. But these sentiments have so spread since that time, that there are now more than a hundred ministers who espouse the sentiments in the United States; and the number seems to be fast increasing.”\*

Such was the testimony of Hopkins (and no man was better qualified to give testimony than he) as to the connection of the early Hopkinsians with Pres. Edwards; and consequently as to the fact that Edwards did attempt some improvements upon the theology of the older Calvinists. He did undertake to place some things in a clearer and fairer light.†

Of the same purport is the following passage from the autobiography of Dr. Emmons. Edwards commenced the study of theology a Calvinist of the old school, and read, as he was directed, Willard's and Ridgely's expositions of the Assembly's Catechism. “But when I came to Mr. Smalley's,” says he, “I found myself in the situation of Apollo, who needed to be instructed more perfectly. Mr. Smalley was a man of strong and clear mind, who had thoroughly digested Mr. Emmon's writings, and who was well qualified for an instructor. I lived with him several weeks before

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\*Autobiography. pp. 96, 102.

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†In his contrast, Ely says, “I use the word Hopkinsianism to denote that system of doctrine, whose foundations were laid by Pres. Edwards, whose superstructure was principally reared by Dr. Samuel Hopkins, and whose top stone has been carried up by a great multitude, shouting *grace, grace* unto it.” p. 4.

I had the least apprehension that he differed in sentiment from those old Calvinistic authors which I had just been reading. But he gradually opened what has been called the *New Divinity*. I was startled, and with all the strength I had, I endeavored to object against the new sentiments he advanced. But he always refuted and generally convinced me. At length, I became a thorough convert to his sentiments, and received his instructions with great avidity.”\*

But we have still stronger testimony to the fact of Edwards’ alleged improvements in the theology, I mean that of his son, Rev. Dr. Edwards, formerly of New Haven. He has an entire article, entitled, “Remarks on the Improvements made in Theology by Pres. Edwards.” The topics mentioned by Dr. Edwards, on which his father was supposed to have shed “new light,” were the following: The ultimate end of God in creation; liberty and necessity; the nature of true virtue or holiness, as consisting in disinterested love; the origin of moral evil; the doctrine of atonement; the interpretation of Adam’s sin and of Christ’s righteousness; the state of the unregenerate, their use of means, and the directions proper to be addressed to them; also the nature of regeneration, and true, experimental religion.† On the

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\*Emmons’ works, Vol. I., p. 13. The Mr. Smalley, of whom Emmons speaks, was the Rev. John Smalley, D. D., of Berlin, Conn.

†See works of Dr. Edwards. Vol I., pp. 480—492.

topic last mentioned, I have already spoken. Of the others, some were discussed fully by Edwards, himself ; others were treated more at large by his followers. It will not be necessary to go into a consideration of them all, and point out, under each, the changes which were introduced. On some of them, however, the helps which were furnished to succeeding theologians are too important to be passed over in silence. They will come up for consideration in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V.

## IMPROVEMENTS OF EDWARDS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

PREVIOUS to the time of Edwards, the subject of *Moral Agency* had not been thoroughly investigated, and was not understood. Certain things were supposed to be involved in freedom of the will, which are not involved in it; and from this mistaken supposition resulted consequences unfavorable to the cause of truth. Up to this period, for example, freedom of will was understood to imply *indifference* of will, or that man, to be free, can not be the subject of any controlling bias to evil. Hence, those who held the doctrine of native depravity were led to deny, in terms, the freedom of the will. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and many others, insisted on what they called *the bondage of the will*; only meaning that the will of fallen men is not in a state of indifference, but is under what Paul denominates "the bondage of corruption."



It was formerly insisted, too, that freedom of action necessarily implies *contingency* of action, or that there can be no previous certainty or moral necessity relative to the actions of free agents. Hence, many were led to argue, from the conscious freedom of man, against the doctrine of God's foreknowledge and decrees; and others, who admitted these doctrines, felt constrained to deny the freedom of the will.

It was, moreover, asserted by Arminians, and admitted by some distinguished Calvinists, in the days of Edwards, that freedom of will necessarily implies a self-originating, self-determining power of the will. Calvinists, who made this admission, felt the importance of maintaining, in opposition to materialists and fatalists, the proper freedom of the will, and they knew not how to do it but by admitting that the will determines itself, or that man originates his own volitions independent of any external cause.\*

It was under these circumstances that Edwards undertook his celebrated treatise on "The Freedom of the Will." Never was a work of the kind more needed, and few works have ever exerted a

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\*The younger Edwards, speaking of the state of things in the religious world, at the time when his father commenced writing his treatise on the will, says, "The Calvinists themselves began to be ashamed of their own cause, and to give it up, so far, at least, as relates to liberty and necessity. This was true especially of Doctors Watts and Doddridge, who, in their day, were accounted leaders of the Calvinists. They must needs bow in the house of Rimmon, and admit the self-determining power, which, once admitted and pursued to its ultimate results, entirely overthrows the doctrines of regeneration by the Spirit, of our dependence for renewing, sanctifying grace, of absolute decrees, of the saint's perseverance of all the other doctrines of grace."

greater influence. In this work (after occupying a few sections with his definition of terms) Pres. Edwards goes on to show—in opposition to Arminians, Pelagians and infidels—that liberty of will does not imply indifference of will, or contingency, or a self-determining power, but merely *choice*, or the *power of choice*, “without taking into the meaning of the word anything of the cause or origin of that choice, or at all considering how the person came to have such a volition.” In other words, Pres. Edwards maintained that *freedom is an essential property of will*. He insisted that “wherever there is volition, there is free action; wherever there is spontaneity, there is liberty,”—however and by whomsoever that liberty and spontaneity are caused.

This is not the place in which to examine minutely the arguments of Edwards, or to point out the manner in which he disposed of the objections of his subtle adversaries. Suffice it to say that his arguments were such that, in the opinion of such a man as Dugeld Stuart, “they were never answered and never will be;” and his replies to objections were such that, after long and frequent discussion, the fairness and conclusiveness of them have not been successfully impeached.

I have dwelt so long on the improvements of Edwards in relation to the one topic of moral agency, that I shall not have time to touch upon some others which were elaborated solely or



chiefly by himself. His treatise on "Original Sin" was, perhaps, less satisfactory to most of his followers than any of his works; and yet, he scarcely differed from the views now generally prevailing among the Orthodox of New England, except in a single point, viz., the constituted *oneness* of Adam and his posterity, so that they are all guilty, as he was, of the first transgression.\* Few among us at the present day would say, I imagine as much as this. Yet, we all say with Edwards, that there is, in the posterity of Adam universally, and as a consequence of his first transgression, a prevailing bias or tendency to sin, through the influence of which they are, from the first, corrupted, sin is natural to them, and they go on sinning, until they are renewed by sovereign grace. To establish this fundamental doctrine, in opposition to Taylor, Whitby, and others who denied it, was the main design of Edwards' treatise, and although some who revere his name would not adopt his entire phraseology on the subject, yet all agree in regarding his work as, perhaps, the ablest defence of human depravity, and of the connection of this depravity with the first sin of Adam, that was ever written.

Some of the topics referred to by the younger Edwards were discussed more fully by the followers of his father, than by himself. The difficult

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\*See Edwards' Treatise. Part IV., Chap. 3.

question as to the origin of evil, and the reasons why it is suffered to exist, was treated with much ability by Bellamy and Hopkins. Bellamy's "Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin" is a work generally known. In the year 1759, Hopkins published three sermons on the same subject, which have been less read, but are equally satisfactory.

The doctrine of atonement, which seems not to have been touched by Pres. Edwards, except as involved in the more general subject of redemption, was lucidly treated by his son, and by Dr. West, of Stockbridge. To these men, more than to any others, are the theologians of New England indebted for the clear and consistent views which now generally prevail on this vital topic. The distinction between atonement and redemption; the universality of the former as to its sufficiency; and particularity of the latter in its application; the entire consistency between full satisfaction to Divine justice on the one hand, and free grace in forgiveness on the other; these are points which, so far as I know, had never been clearly stated and established, previous to the publications of the younger Edwards and Dr. West.

Still another subject, which was more fully discussed by the followers of Edwards than by himself, was the condition of the unregenerate, and the directions proper to be given to them in order to insure their salvation. Up to that time of Ed-

wards, and even later, the state of natural and entire depravity was commonly regarded as one of physical impotency, in which the subject was free to do evil, but not to do good; in which he had no power of any kind to turn from his sins to God, and render him a holy, spiritual obedience. Accordingly, the directions usually given to sinners were, to use means with such hearts as they had, and wait and pray for better hearts,—wait at the gospel pool for the moving of the waters,—wait till the Spirit was shed down upon them from on high. That I do not mis-state here, every one who has read the old Calvinistic writers, even the best of them, can testify. Thus good Mr. Boston, addressing the impenitent, says :

“Though you can not recover yourselves, nor *take hold of the saving help offered to you in the gospel*, yet, even by the power of nature, ye may *use the outward and ordinary means*, whereby Christ communicates the benefits of redemption to ruined sinners, who are utterly unable to recover themselves out of the state of sin and wrath. Ye may, and can, do many things, if you please, that would set you in a fair way for help from the Lord Jesus Christ. Though you can not cure yourselves, yet you may come to the pool, where many such diseased persons as you are have been cured. And though ye have none to put you into pool, yet ye may lie at the side of it; and who knows

but the Lord may return and leave a blessing behind him?"\*

So Mr. Willison, in his *Sacramental Directory*, says to impenitent souls: "Stir up yourselves to take hold of Christ, when he is so near, and in your offer. Strive earnestly while there is an ark prepared, and a window opened in the side of it, and the hand of mercy is put forth to pull in shelterless doves that can find no rest elsewhere. Strive to come near by the wings of faith; make your nest beside the hole's mouth; be not found hovering without, lest the flood wash you away, and ye perish miserably. Try, O poor soul, if you can get a grip of Christ, especially upon a sacramental occasion, when you are nearer to him than at other times. If you can not apply Christ to yourself and say, 'He is mine,' yet apply yourself to Christ, and say, 'I would fain be thine.' Go forth to Christ, with all the faith you can arrive at. Say with the poor man, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.' You must not sit still, and do nothing, but use all the means in your power; for it is in the use of these, that God works faith. Hoist up your sails then and wait for the gales."

Mr. Ebenezer Erskine in his sermon on "The Assurance of Faith" says: "Let us store our minds with the pure and precious truths of God, and acquaint ourselves with those things which

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\*See *Boston's Four-fol State*. Part ii.

are to be believed, as they are laid before us in the Scriptures of truth ; and having thus laid in the seed into the ground or soil of our hearts, let us look heavenward, and wait for a shower of the Spirit's influences. They that offered sacrifices of old, though they could not make fire come down from heaven and consume the victim, yet they could fetch the bullock out of the stall, or the lamb out of the fold ; they could bind it with cords to the horns of the altar ; they could gather the sticks, and lay in the proper fuel ; and, having done their part, they could look to heaven for the celestial fire to set all in a flame together. In like manner I say, *Do what is incumbent on you.* Gather your sticks, lay in the proper fuel, and store your minds with the materials of faith, which you are daily reading or hearing in the Word."

I need not quote more passages of this description. The old Calvinistic writers are full of them. This is the way in which they commonly directed inquiring souls. Astonishing that they did not see their contrariety to the directions of the Scriptures and of Christ ! The propriety of such directions was not much called in question until after Edwards' death. The subject was then very fully discussed by Hopkins, Emmons, Spring, of Newburyport, and several others — the followers of Edwards — who passed under the general name of Hopkinsians. In the year 1761, Dr. Mayhew, of Boston, published a volume of sermons, in

which he endeavored to show that there are promises in Scripture to the doings of the unregenerate. Dr. Hopkins replied to these sermons. This brought him into controversy, not directly with Dr. Mayhew, but with several Calvinistic ministers, Mr. Mills, of Ripton, Conn., Mr. Hart, of Saybrook, and Dr. Hemmenway, of Wells, Me. In 1784, Dr. Spring, of Newburyport published his "Dialogue on Duty," in which he strenuously controverted a sermon by Rev. Dr. Tappan, afterward Professor of Divinity in Cambridge. Dr. Tappan insisted that "persons in a state of unrenewed nature may perform some things," — such as attending on the means of grace, — "which are their duty, or which, in some respects, are truly right." This, Dr. Spring denied; not meaning to deny that it is the duty of all men, whether saints or sinners, to attend upon the means of grace, but they must attend in the exercise of holy affections, and then they would all be saints. They must attend, and attend right. They must read and hear the gospel right. They must pray right. They must perform every duty from right motives, and in the exercise of right affections, such as God requires, and will accept.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THEOLOGICAL DIVISIONS IN NEW ENGLAND.—INTRODUCTION OF UNITARIANISM.

I pass from the subject of improvements in theology to notice the divisions which prevailed among the clergy of New England, to whom these alleged improvements were submitted.

During the latter part of the last century and at the commencement of this, the Congregational clergy of New England were divided into *three classes*, pretty clearly defined, though there were individuals who might not be ranked with either, viz., the Arminians, the Hopkinsians, and the old Calvinists. The Arminians were, in general, those, or the successors of those, who opposed the great revival of 1740; who were unfriendly to earnest evangelical religion; who, from their dread of wild fire, thought it best to exclude all fire from their dwellings, and thus relapsed into a stale

coldness and formality. Their Arminianism, as I have before remarked, was not at all like that of the Wesleys, and should not be called by the same name. It was rather that of Taylor and Whitby among the English divines, and Chauncy, Mayhew, Gay, of Hingham, and West, of New Bedford, among those of this country. Some of them were secretly Arians, and were assiduously laboring, out of sight, to introduce this form of error into New England. They were the fathers and founders of American Unitarianism, which was not openly avowed until 1815, but was relatively stronger, and vastly more efficient, before its avowal, than it has ever been since.

In most instances of the prevalence of Unitarianism, it has first showed itself in the form of high Arianism, retaining some of the doctrines of grace. But from this point it has commonly declined, until all evangelical truth, and with the inspiration of the Scriptures, are discarded. So it was in Geneva and among the Protestants of France; so it was among the Presbyterians in England; and so it has been in this country. The Unitarianism which we have seen among us for the last half century is a very different thing from that which was secretly held and inculcated in the times of which we speak — so different that some of the older Unitarians prefer connecting themselves with Orthodox societies, rather than countenance the Unitarianism which now chiefly prevails.



At the beginning of this century, the Unitarians were in possession of nearly all the old Congregational churches in and around Boston, and many of those in the eastern part of Massachusetts. They soon got possession of Harvard College, and wielded the mighty influence of that venerable Institution for their own purposes. Their principal organ of communication with the public was the *Monthly Anthology*, which was commenced in 1803, and continued through some eight or ten volumes, being edited by some of the Boston ministers. Still, the existence of Unitarianism was not acknowledged, at least, among Congregationalists, and when individuals were charged with it, they complained, in some instances, that they were slandered.

I make these statements, that the manner in which Unitarianism found its way into our churches may be understood. Like heresies of old it "came in privily." It "crept in unawares." As soon as its existence was clearly known, it was repudiated by the Orthodox. Ministerial and church fellowship was withdrawn, religious societies were, in many instances, divided, and, in a few years, a thorough separation was effected.

The Hopkinsian party, of which we are to speak, commenced with the pupils and followers of Pres. Edwards. They were few at first, not numbering, as before stated, more than five or six,—prominent among whom were Doctors Hop-

kins and Bellamy, the younger Edwards, West, of Stockbridge, Spring, of Newburyport, and Dr. Emmons. But as each of these men were instructors in theology, and had many pupils, the number of ministers in this class rapidly increased. These were the men above referred to, who, while they venerated the name of Edwards, did not consider themselves bound to stop just where he stopped, or to follow implicitly in his steps. They were bound rather, as they thought, to carry out his leading principles to what they deemed their legitimate results.

That the leading Hopkinsians of New England were men of great diligence, and of distinguished ability in their profession, there can be no doubt. They wrote and published on a variety of subjects, and were faithful and successful ministers of Christ. They were the friends and promoters of revivals of religion, and were chiefly concerned in originating the modern missionary movement, and most of the other benevolent operations of the age.\* Their earliest periodicals were the New York *Theological Magazine*, the Connecticut *Evangelical Magazine*, and the Massachusetts *Missionary Magazine*. The last was more exclusively theirs than either of the others.

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\*More than fifty years ago, Dr. Dwight said that, in traveling over New England, he "found those ministers who preached the doctrines of grace earnestly, were generally called Hopkinsians." And Dr. Wood says of the same class, "we have found no more able and useful ministers, and no more earnest Christians than many of these." *Theology of the Puritans*. p. 13.

The Calvinists of these times were those who rejected the peculiarities of the New, Edwardean, or Hopkinsian divinity, and adhered more closely to the theology of their fathers. Many of them were but moderate Calvinists, and yet they passed under this general name. They had controversy with the Hopkinsians respecting the nature of human depravity, the imputation of Adam's sin, the nature and extent of the atonement, the natural inability of the unregenerate to turn to God, the directions to be given to inquiring sinners, the use of religious means, &c. The leading men of this class were Pres. Stiles, of Yale College, Dr. Tappan, of Cambridge College, Pres. McKean, of Bowdoin College, Doctors Dana, of Ipswich, and Morse, of Charlestown, and Homes, of Cambridge, and Dr. Pearson, the first Professor of Sacred Literature in the Seminary at Andover. These and many others of the same class were able and excellent ministers in their day. They went down honored to their graves, and their memory is precious. Their publications on religious subjects were not so numerous as those of the Hopkinsians. The Panoplist was instituted by this class of theologians, but was afterwards united with the Missionary Magazine.

These three divisions continued, in about their usual distinctness, until after the commencement of the present century, when the Hopkinsians and Calvinists began to amalgamate, and the Armin-

ians in their progress towards Unitarianism became more decidedly and palpably heretical. At present, there is very little avowed Arminianism in the Congregational churches of New England. What of Arminianism remains among us is of another stamp, and shows itself in other connections. The Wesleyan Methodists became organized in this country soon after the close of the revolutionary war, and have grown to be a very numerous body. On some of the points of difference between Calvinists and Arminians they confessedly take sides with the latter; and the same may be said of the General or Free Will Baptists. The other and larger class of Baptists are Calvinistic. In the Congregational churches, as before stated there is little or no professed Arminianism left. It has been swallowed up in the great gulf of Unitarianism.

## CHAPTER VII.

UNION OF HOPKINSIANS AND CALVINISTS, AND ITS RESULTS.—THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.

I have already said that, near the beginning of the present century, the Hopkinsians and Calvinists of New England began to manifest a disposition for union. Several causes contributed to this. In the first place, revivals of religion were becoming more frequent, which stirred the hearts of all true Christians, awakened the spirit of love, and led them to think and talk less of their differences, and more on those great points of doctrine in which they were agreed. Then, in their mutual discussions, they had come to understand each other better, their views on both sides had been modified, the early prejudices against Hopkinsianism or New Divinity had passed away. The pressure from without, too, had influence with many. The dread of a vaunting, spreading Unitarianism in-

clined them to drop their differences, and unite for the maintainance of gospel truth.

The union of which I speak,—a union brought about, not by any formal act, but by the spontaneous running together of the two classes referred to, I regard as a very important event in our theological history. One of the earliest indications of it was the union of the Calvinistic “Panoplist” with the Hopkinsian “Missionary Magazine.” This took place in the year 1808; and for the next eight years the work was conducted with distinguished ability, by Jeremiah Evarts.

The same year (1808) the theological Seminary at Andover was instituted and went into operation, confessedly on the ground of union.\* The original founders of the Seminary were Calvinistic, and required that the Professor on their foundation should be a man of sound and orthodox principles according to that system of evangelical doctrine denominated “the Westminster Assembly’s Shorter Catechism.” The “Associate founders” are supposed to have been Hopkinsians, or at least to have been under Hopkinsian influence. Accordingly an explanatory creed was joined with the Assembly’s Catechism, embodying most of the peculiarities of the Hopkinsian faith. A board of visitors was also established to

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\*“In the establishment of the Seminary,” says the “Panoplist” for January, 1809, “old Calvinists, as they are called, and Hopkinsians have united their funds and their efforts. This union, we doubt not, has given general pleasure to the friends of orthodoxy and piety.”



co-operate with the board of Trustees, nearly all the original members of which are supposed to have been Hopkinsians. In the Faculty, too, as originally constituted, both classes of theologians were represented: the Calvinists by Dr. Pearson, and the Hopkinsians by Dr. Woods, and perhaps by Dr. Griffin.\*

In consequence of the union here spoken of, not only did the old division of Hopkinsians and Calvinists in great measure disappear, but in reference to the most of our clergy, the names were no longer distinctively used. All were Calvinists, in a modified sense; while all felt the influence of Edwards and his followers, and had adopted, more or less, the Hopkinsian explanations. There were a few, indeed, on both sides, who were averse to the union, and refused to go into it, and these were called Hopkinsians and Calvinists as before; but the great majority of our Orthodox clergy became, from this period, a visibly united body.

And as they had become a united body, they needed some name or phrase by which their theology might be designated. It was not Calvinism or Hopkinsianism in the sense in which these terms had been used for half a century, but the coalition or running together of both; and it is just here that we find the origin of a phrase which

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\*The "original founders" endowed one professorship—that of theology; the "associate founders" endowed the other three.

is very appropriate, and is commonly used at this day—the NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.\*

Without doubt, the roots, the general principles of this theology may be traced farther back. They may be traced to the Bible, to the Reformers, to our Pilgrim Fathers, and more especially to President Edwards and his followers. It was Edwards, and those who succeeded him, who sowed the seeds and nurtured the growth of what has been specifically called the New England Theology. But the phrase itself, in its present acceptation, was never used, so far as I can discover, until subsequent to the union of 1808. Indeed, there was nothing in our earlier theological history, to which it could with propriety have been applied. The theology of the early settlers of New England was, as we have seen, old-school Calvinism; and this was the prevailing theology for the first hundred and thirty years. Still, it was not called New England Theology, nor could it have been with propriety so called, since it was not a theology peculiar to New England. It was the same with that of the Reformed churches abroad.

Nor was the Hopkinsian theology ever called

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\*This union of Hopkinsianists and Calvinists was a source of much anxiety to the liberal party of that day, and the phase of theology which was being developed they hardly knew how to designate. Sometimes they called it Andoverian Calvinism, and sometimes Hopkinsian Calvinism. See Norton's Repository, Vol. III., pp. 361, 369. Soon, however, it obtained the more respectable designation of New England Theology, which it has borne ever since.



New England Theology previous to the time of which I have spoken. It was called Edwardean, Hopkinsians, New Divinity, &c., but never, so far as I can learn, New England Theology. Indeed, it could not have been thus designated with propriety. In the year 1756, Hopkins could not reckon more than half a dozen ministers who adopted his peculiar views. In 1796, he thinks they may have increased to a hundred, or more, and in the next ten or twelve years, they still farther increased; but never to such an extent as to become the proper representatives of the theology of New England. Here were the Calvinists and the Arminians, either of whom were probably quite as numerous as they. But when the Arminians had gone off into Unitarianism, and the great body of the two other divisions had come together, and were operating together to sustain the same institutions and publications, their theology began to be called the New England Theology, and so it has been called by good people generally ever since.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY—WHAT IS IT?—IMPORTANCE OF UNION.

IN my last chapter, I spoke of the union between Hopkinsians and Calvinists, and of the New England Theology as resulting from it. The general principles of this theology had been inculcated long before, more especially by Edwards and his followers; but it assumed a new phase, and took a new name early in the present century.

As the two classes uniting in 1808, did not become perfectly one in sentiment, so the theology which they inculcated admitted of some diversity of statement and explanation. Still, they were agreed on all important points, and wherein they differed, they were tacidly pledged to a mutual toleration. They unitedly held what have ever been considered the prominent points of Calvinism:

such as the universal and eternal purposes of God ; the free agency of man ; the entire sinfulness of the natural heart, in consequence of the original apostacy ; the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit ; justification by faith ; redemption by the blood of Christ ; the perseverance of saints unto eternal life ; and the endless punishment of those who die in their sins. If these are Calvinistic doctrines, some of them peculiarly so, then the New England theology is Calvinistic, and our ministers may, with propriety, be denominated Calvinists. Still, they are not Calvinists in the exact sense of the New England fathers two hundred years ago. Some of the above doctrines they do not state or explain precisely as their fathers did. I notice a few particulars in which the correct New England theology differs from the Calvinism of a former age.

It used to be said by some, that the first sin of Adam was so imputed or put over to us as to become ours ; and by others, that we were so *in* Adam, and *one* with him, as to be the actual, guilty partakers of his sin. This was our *original* sin — the nit and root of all other sins. I think there are few clergymen of New England now who would explain the connection of our sin with that of Adam in either of these ways.

It used to be said that man, by the fall, became so incapacitated for good, that he had no ability *of any kind* to love God, return to him, and per-

form spiritual duties. But our ministers now are generally, perhaps universally, agreed in regarding the inability of the sinner to return to God as, not a physical impotency, but a moral indisposition—as consisting, not in a want of natural faculties and powers, but rather in a settled aversion of the heart from God, which furnishes no excuse for continued impenitence.

It was said formerly by Calvinists that, as the sinner has no ability of any kind to turn to God and do his duty, but only to use the appointed means, so he should be directed to use such means, and persevere in the use of them, waiting and hoping for converting grace. But there are none of our ministers—I hope and trust there are not—who would give instructions such as these. We have come back to the directions of Christ and the apostles: “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” “Make you a new heart, and a new spirit.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Or, if means are directed to be used, as they often are, it is with the understanding that they be used right, and not wrong—used in yielding to them, not in resisting them—used in the exercise of holy affections, and not of those which are selfish and perverse.

Our ministers do not merge regeneration in effectual calling, or the atonement in redemption, after the manner of their fathers. The old Cal-

vinistic writers have almost nothing to say respecting regeneration or the atonement. The word atonement does not once occur in the Assembly's Confession of Faith, or in either of the catechisms. It scarcely occurs, except in relation to the typical atonements of the Old Testament, in any of the early Protestant Confessions, or in the writings of Calvin, or even in those of Pres. Edwards. This word, in the present use of it, with all the light which it sheds upon the pathway of truth, may be regarded as a fruit of New England theology.

Such are some of the points on which our ministers are generally agreed, and which the New England theology differs from the Calvinism of the last century.

I have said that there are a few points on which our ministers are not agreed. They were not at the time of the union of 1808, nor have they been at any period since. In a country where there is so much thought on religious subjects, and such unrestricted freedom of thought, an entire unanimity is not to be expected.

There is a difference among our soundest theologians as to the precise nature of sin. Some represent all sin as actual. It is what the sinner himself commits. Others distinguish between the sin of nature and of act, regarding the former as the root and ground of the latter.

The difference of opinion respecting the nature

of sin leads to a corresponding difference as to the connection of our sin with that of Adam ; the one class holding that we have inherited from Adam a sinful nature, while the other teaches that we have inherited, not strictly a sinful nature, but rather a bias, a tendency, a nature to sin.

These two classes of theologians differ also, as might be expected, in their views of regeneration. With the one class, regeneration is a change in taste, of relish, of principle, of nature—of something back of, and furnishing the ground of, all holy affections, while, with the other class, regeneration is a change in the affections themselves from those which are sinful to those which are holy.

The differences here spoken of are found, as I said, among our soundest and most orthodox theologians. They existed at the time of the union, in 1808, and have existed ever since. Hitherto, they have proved no bar in the way of fraternal union and co-operation. We trust it may be so in time to come.

These are the most substantial reasons, we think, why it should be so. For, in the first place, however these differences may appear in speculation, in practice they amount to but very little. Both classes of ministers, when they preach practically, preach much alike. Both press home upon the sinner his personal guilt and just condemnation. Both teach his need of Divine influ-

ences, and at the same time, his immediate obligations to repent. Both urge alike the free invitations and motives of the gospel, crying in the ears of a thoughtless world, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Whomsoever will, let him come, and take the waters of life freely."

Then there was an understanding, at the time of the union, that these differences should not impair fellowship, or prevent a cordial co-operation; else there could have been no union at all. These differences existed then, as now. They were known to exist. The discussion of taste and exercise had been an exciting one. Still, there was a union affected, the fact of which, as before remarked, involved a pledge of mutual forbearance and fellowship.

There is still another reason why these two classes of theologians should not be exclusive in their claims. The venerable fathers of the New England theology, such as the Edwardses, Bellamy, Hopkins, West, of Stockbridge, and Dwight may be quoted on both sides of most of those questions to which I have referred. They often *are* quoted on both sides. This fact is indubitable, and it may be satisfactorily accounted for, without impeaching either their sagacity, or their fidelity to truth. With the mental philosophy which they had adopted, the philosophy of Locke, which resolves the whole mind into understanding and



will, I see not how they could well avoid running occasionally on both sides of these questions. For leaving out of their mental analysis the entire region of the sensibilities lying between the understanding and will, they would naturally assign the religious emotions and feelings, sometimes to the understanding and sometimes to the will, in a way to create confession and inconsistency.

I submit the above as the solution of a remarkable fact, viz., that in speaking of the natures of holiness, of sin, and of regeneration, the venerable fathers of the New England theology were not always consistent with themselves.\* At least, they do not seem so to us. With their inadequate philosophy of the human mind, it could hardly have been otherwise. I urge this fact as a reason why those who venerate the names of these men, and respect their authority, but have the misfortune to differ in the points above referred to, should not be exclusive in their claims, but should consent to labor together as brethren†

Other differences have come up more recently in New England, of which it may be necessary, before closing, to say a few words. Some thirty years ago, or more, an attempt was made by Rev. N. W. Taylor, D. D., of New Haven, to innovate

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\*Dr. Emmons has been claimed as the first man in New England who carried the Exercise scheme consistently through. See Remarks, p. 78.

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†For an eloquent discussion against alienation, an account of minor differences in theology, see Dr. Wood's first letter to Dr. Beecher, in *Spirit to the Pilgrims*. Vol. V. p. 455.



upon our established theology. The general subject of his speculations was the nature and necessary limitations of the moral government of God. They seem to have been started with the benevolent design of relieving the Divine character in the difficult matter of the admission of sin ; also to vindicate the sincerity of God's universal offers and earnest invitations to sinners who are finally lost.

In regard to the existence of sin, the doctrine of our New England fathers has been that it came into the universe of God, not because he loves it, or because it has any tendency to good, or because he could not prevent it consistently with the free agency of his creatures ; but sin is permitted to exist because, hateful as it is, God saw in eternity that he could so over-rule it as to make it the occasion, in opposition to all its tendencies, of an overbalancing amount of good, on the whole. He saw that the plan which included sin and redemption—and there could be no redemption without sin—was the best one possible, the best conceivable, involving the highest glory to himself, and the greatest possible good of the intelligent universe, as a whole. Hence, this plan of procedure was preferred, and was adopted, and sin is permitted to exist.\*

But the New Haven divines could not accept

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\*See Bellamy's *Wisdom of God in the Permission of Sin*.

this theory. They insisted that it is unsupported, that it involves groundless assumptions, that there may be other and better reasons for the existence of sin. Without affirming anything very positively, they tell us — using their own words — that no man knows, or can prove “that God could have adopted a moral system, and prevented all sin, or the present amount of sin;” that “sin, as to God’s prevention, may be incidental to a moral universe;” that “it may be true, that God would have secured universal holiness in his moral kingdom, if he could;” and that God prefers, all things considered, that all his creatures should now become holy. To prevent all appearance of misrepresentation, I here quote the very language of one of the leaders of this movement. Numerous passages of like import might be given. There was a brisk discussion of these and the kindred topics, at the time, between Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, and Doctors Woods, Tyler, and Harvey, on the other side.

The suppositions of the New Haven brethren did not strike the great body of our ministers and churches favorably; and with the passing away of their original propounders, they, too, have passed away. They may be held by individuals, but they are no longer discussed.

More recently, some of our ministers have been led to doubt as to the proper Divinity of Christ, as to his atonement, as to the eternity of future pun-

ishment, and perhaps others of the essential doctrines of the gospel. They seem to have been led into these speculations by their philosophy. They claim to be spiritually elevated by them, think themselves in no danger, and protest against being regarded by their brethren as heretical. The movement is a recent one—too recent to be made a matter of history. On the question—warmly discussed in some places—whether these men shall be permitted to remain in fellowship with their ministerial brethren, I have nothing to say in this place. I must say, however, that the points on which they are in doubt are most important ones—essential to the integrity of our theological system, and we see not how persons can persist in rejecting them, and yet be sound and healthful believers. The probability is that they will do, as others have done before them, slide down from one point to another, till they land in an entire rejection of the gospel of Christ.

## CHAPTER IX.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

It has been made a question, in these days, whether Congregationalism is a religious denomination, or whether it is a mere collection of individual churches, having no denominational relation or responsibility to each other. I see not how such a question can be raised—much less sustained.

What is necessary to constitute a collection of churches a denomination? In the first place, they must have a *name*, known and acknowledged as such. Our churches certainly have this, and have held it for the last two hundred years.

Then they must be held together by some *common specific principles*. This, too, is true of our churches. There is the principle of church independency, on the one hand, and the principle of

mutual fellowship and responsibility on the other. Both these were held and acted upon in the very commencement of our history, and so they have been in all periods since. Our fathers had their Synods in which they adopted creeds, and a Platform of church government, and transacted such other business as they thought necessary. The term Synod has gone out of use, but others equally expressive and appropriate have taken its place. We have our Ecclesiastical councils, and Church Conferences, larger or smaller, as the case may require. We have our Ministerial Associations, and General Associations, in which the pastors of different churches assemble, discuss questions, pass votes and resolutions, and transact such other business as may be necessary. In these bodies, too, we have established offices, and officers duly qualified, attending upon their appropriate work.

In short, Congregationalism, in this country, and in other countries, has a common name, and acknowledged; specific principles of union, which have been maintained and carried out, for more than two centuries, and it is as really a religious denomination as is Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, or any other. The independence of the individual churches constitutes no objection to this. As well might it be said that a republic is not a form of civil government because, each of the members composing it is an independent citizen.

I conclude these brief sketches of our theological history with the correction of a very common mistake, as to the influence of the Edwardean, the Hopkinsian, the New England theology, in introducing Unitarianism into a portion of our churches. Some of our brethren of the old Calvinistic school, more especially some in the Presbyterian church, will have it that this was the case. "This new theology," it is said, "was a lowering, a letting down, of the bars of Calvinism; and these once let down, errors came in like a flood."\* Let us look, then, at this question for a moment, historically.

There was no Unitarianism of any kind in New England, so far as we have the means of knowing, until subsequent to the great revival of 1740. It was not long after the close of this awakening, that Arianism began to creep in among us privily. And who brought it in? Who were the Arians of that period? Were they among the friends and promoters of the revival—the pupils and followers of Pres. Edwards? Not; I venture to say, in a single instance. So far from this, the Arians of that day were, to a man, of the opposite class. They had been settled as Calvinists, or moderately so, but in their zeal against vital, spiritual religion, and its most earnest supporters, they had swerved from the faith, and were secret-

\*See Ely's Contrast. p. 257.

ly introducing another gospel.\* I do not now recollect a church, where the doctrines of Edwards and his followers were preached from seventy to a hundred years ago, which has since become Unitarian; while it would be easy to mention scores of churches, which once were Calvinistic, in distinction from Edwardean or Hopkinsians, which first became Arian in doctrine and lax in discipline, over which Unitarian ministers have since been established.

The doctrinal influence, which led to the corruption of a portion of our churches, are very obvious, and have been hinted at already. This corruption resulted from the doctrine of a *physical depravity* in fallen man, and a consequent natural, physical inability to love God and perform spiritual duties. It was because the sinner was regarded as in this sense unable to return to God and do his duty, that he was urged to use means in his unregenerate state. To what else should he be urged? To repent of his sins and perform spiritual duties he had no ability of any kind; and what should he do, or be directed to do, but to use means with such a heart as he had? It was under the influence of the same dogma, that he was urged to come to the Lord's Table as a means of conversion, — to "come to the pipes" as one of our old ministers

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\*Among the Arians of that period, according to the first President Adams, were the Rev. Messrs. Bryant, of Braintree, Chauncy and Mayhew, of Boston, Shute and Gay, of Hingham, and Brown, of Cohasset, — all of them opposers of the revival, of Edwards, and his followers. See Pres. Adams' Letter to Dr. Morse.



expresses it, "through which the waters of salvation are ordinarily conveyed to the soul." And when, in consequence of such instructions, unconverted men had been admitted to the churches, they soon found their way into the pulpits; and so the ministry and the church were corrupted together. There can be no doubt that our ministers and churches were spiritually corrupted years before they were doctrinally corrupted. Arianism and Unitarianism were in the heart, before they took possession of the head.

From this account of the matter, which no one acquainted with our religious history can doubt, we see how unfounded is the charge that Unitarianism came into our churches in consequence of the Edwardean or Hopkinsian theology. It was introduced rather in spite of this theology, and under the influence of some of the mistaken assumptions of the more ancient Calvinistic faith.

Neither ourselves, nor Christian brethren around us, have any reason to be afraid of what has been called the New England Theology. This theology I have already described. It is not old Calvinism on the one hand, nor high Hopkinsianism on the other, but retains the better, the more essential parts of both. It embraces all the leading features of the soundest Calvinism, but does not state, explain, or apply some of them precisely as did our fathers two hundred years ago. It adopts, to a considerable extent, the improvements of Edwards

and his followers. and, without pretending to a uniformity in all things, may be described as that theology which was taught by such men as Bellamy, Hopkins, and the younger Edwards, and West, of Stockbridge, and Smalley, Spring, Emmons, Austin, Griffin, Worcester, and Dwight. This is the theology which has been preached in nearly all our revivals during the last sixty or seventy years, which has filled up our churches with young and active members, which has aroused and sustained the spirit of missions, which has fostered and directed nearly all the charitable enterprises of the day; which, so far conniving at essential errors, has been foremost in exposing and withstanding them; which, while it claims to be the same as the theology of the Apostles, has produced, in no stinted measure, the same blessed results. Let this theology be preserved in its purity, free from foreign admixtures and adulterations, and, I repeat, neither ourselves, nor Christian brethren around us, have any reason to be afraid of it. "Wisdom is justified of her children." The tree may be safely judged of by its fruit.

Still, it is not claimed that our theological system is already perfect — so perfect as to be susceptible of no farther improvement. Its leading principles can not, indeed, be changed; but in the mode of stating and explaining these great principles, so as to bring them nearer to the conscience and the heart, and into a closer conformity to the

mind of the Spirit, there may be improvements in years to come, as there have been in ages past. And when real improvements of this kind are presented, let them be thankfully received.

But let them not be received in haste, or without a faithful and prayerful scrutiny. Alleged improvements in theology are always to be suspected. They have often been proved to be dangerous and ruinous. Under pretence of reforming the theology of the church, its strong foundations have been shaken, and its essential principles swept away.

It should be remembered, too, that alleged improvements in theology are not always as new as they claim to be. Their authors may dote upon them with parental fondness, and think that they have brought forth something new, but it is found, on examination, that the petted bantling is but the ghost of some old heresy, which had its day and did its mischief, was refuted and exploded many years ago.

It becomes those who are at the helm in this critical time, — this age of alleged progress and improvement, to be specially on their guard, in reference to this matter. All such improvements as have a bearing towards Pelagianism, Arminianism, or any form of Unitarianism ; improved conceptions of the atonement, or of justification, which remove the substance of these vital doctrines, and leave but a name, a show, a figure of

speech ; improved explanations of those Scriptures which speak of the day of judgment, and the retributions of the other world; in short, all these theories of doctrine which go to exalt men rather than God, which tend to let down the high claims of the gospel and make it acceptable to the carnal mind, which require for their support that the Scriptures be loosely interpreted, if not that their inspiration should be given up,—let all such theories and pretended improvements, however imposing in outward appearance, be interdicted and thrown overboard at once. Rely upon it, there is poison and corruption in them. Their fair exterior is but the covering of disease and death. A wise man will not adventure himself where others have fallen down naked and wounded. “In vain is the net spread in sight of any bird.”

## CHAPTER X.

SKETCHES OF OTHER RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS  
IN NEW ENGLAND.

THE preceding sketches of the theological history of New England are applicable, almost entirely, to Congregationalists. It has been thought proper to follow them with brief notices of the origin and history of some of the principle denominations among us, and,

## I. THE BAPTISTS.

When the first Baptists came to this country, and who they were, it is impossible now to determine. Cotton Mather says that "many of the first settlers in Massachusetts were Baptists." If so, they must have been free communion Baptists; for we hear of no separations among brethren on account of them. We know that two of the early

Presidents of Harvard College, Dunster and Chauncy, were Baptists. Dunster resigned his office because of his peculiar sentiments; but there is no evidence that either of them withdrew from the churches.

The first Baptist church in New England was formed by Roger Williams at Providence, in 1636. The difficulties with the government of Massachusetts had no reference to any Baptist peculiarities. Indeed, there is no evidence that he was a Baptist until after his banishment. Not long after his settlement at Providence, he, with several of his brethren, embraced the views of the Baptists, and wishing to be baptized by immersion, and by one who had been himself immersed, they were not a little embarrassed how to proceed. At length, they appointed Mr. Ezekiel Holliman, a man of piety and gifts, to baptize Mr. Williams. In return, he baptized Mr. Holliman, and all the rest. They were soon joined by others who came to them for the sake of liberty of conscience, and thus originated the first Baptist church in America.

But Mr. Williams was not long satisfied with what had been done. He retained the pastoral charge of the new church only about four months, when he resigned and withdrew, pronouncing all that had been done a nullity. He declared that the ordinance of baptism, as instituted by the apostles, had ceased from the earth, and could only

be renewed by a special commission from heaven.

Mr. Williams assumed no pastoral charge after this, nor did he regard himself as a properly constituted minister of Christ. Still he manifested a deep interest in the cause of Christ, and was much engaged in labors for the Indians. He was succeeded in the pastoral work at Providence, by Mr. Chad Brown, one of the brethren of the church.

The first Baptist church in Massachusetts was organized in Swansey, in 1663, though its formation had been commenced at an earlier period. The first Baptist church was formed in Boston two years later, under the direction, chiefly, of Mr. Thomas Gould, who was its first pastor. After some fifty years, and several successive pastorates, Mr. Elisha Callendar, a graduate of Harvard College, was settled over this church. At his ordination, three Congregational ministers were present, and Cotton Mather preached.

In the early years of New England, the growth of the Baptists was not rapid. This was owing, in part, to the continual vexations and persecutions to which they were exposed, from what was called "the standing order." Our fathers had suffered dreadfully for conscience' sake, but they had not learned the great lesson of "soul liberty." Their church establishment was political, as well as religious, and they were not willing that those Christians should live quietly among them, whose opinions and rites were different from their own.



The great revival of 1740 resulted in a large increase in the number of Baptist churches. The converts in this revival, more especially in places where the work was not favored, could not join the churches which opposed them. They were constrained to separate; and the most of these separate churches, in the end, became Baptists. The early persecution of the Baptists, too, had become unpopular, and were mostly abandoned. Methods had been devised by which Baptist societies could live quietly among us, long before the last link of the old union between Church and State was broken. The consequence was, that Baptist churches and societies grew and multiplied, and soon came to be, what they are now, a power for good in the land. In some parts of New England they largely outnumber the original Congregational churches.

The government of the Baptist churches is free and independent, strongly resembling that of the Congregational churches.

The theology of the Baptist churches,—I mean that of the strict Baptists,—is Calvinistic. In their early days, it was highly so. Dr. Gill was a theological leader in this country, as in England. For the last half century, or more, the form of Baptist theology has been considerably modified. Andrew Fuller was a diligent student, and hearty receiver, of the Edwardean peculiarities, and through him and others, they have come to pre-

vail very generally among the Baptist ministers and churches in both Old England and New. The theology of the Baptists in New England differs scarcely, if at all, from that of the Congregationalists. It is what we have called, in a previous chapter, the *New England Theology*.

There is a class of Baptists among us to whom this remark will not strictly apply. They are what have been called the *Free Will* or *Arminian Baptists*. These did not originate from the General Baptists of England, but sprang up, as a reaction, from the high Calvinism of the existing Baptist body in this country. The leader in this defection was Mr. Benjamin Randall, of New Durham, N. H. He was already a preacher in the regular Baptist denomination; but in 1780, he announced his dissent from the form of Calvinism prevailing around him. He was assiduous in propagating his peculiar doctrines, and in persuading others to renounce what he called "the hydra-monster of Calvinism." Several Baptist ministers adopted his views, and formed a connection of their own; and from this small beginning, they have come to be a large community, scattered over New England and other parts of the country. They hold firmly to the peculiarities of their order respecting baptism, but are open in their communion, and constitute a highly respectable body of evangelical Christians. The smaller sections of this body unite in Quarterly Meetings;

and from these, delegates are appointed to a Yearly Meeting. Their first Quarterly Meeting was held in 1783.

Both these classes of Baptists, in the commencement of their operations, failed to attach much importance to the education of their ministers, or to the cause of education generally. But in more recent times, they have made great improvement in this respect. They now have their high schools, their colleges, and theological seminaries, and are doing their part most commendably in advancing the cause of general and professional education. They are doing their part, also, in the great work of Christian missions striving, as they are able, to extend the knowledge of Christ throughout the earth. May the great Lord of the harvest accept and bless them in their labors!

## II. EPISCOPALIANS.

The Episcopal church was planted in Virginia, before the coming of our fathers to this country. In New England, it was of later origin, and of slower growth. This was owing to several causes. In the first place, as the first settlers of New England fled from the persecutions of the Established church at home, they would not be likely to welcome the ministers and members of that church to these shores. And then, for a long period, there

were no bishops in New England. The few churches which had been gathered were subject to the care of the bishop of London ; and no ministers could be constituted, without going to England for ordination. Owing to these and perhaps other causes, at the commencement of the Revolution, the whole number of Episcopal clergy north and east of Maryland did not exceed eighty ; and the most of these came here as missionaries, sent out by the old Episcopal society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts.

Then the war of the Revolution was peculiarly severe upon Episcopal clergymen in this country, the most of whom were tories. They thought themselves bound, by both civil and ecclesiastical obligations, to remain true to the British crown.

And when the war was ended, the clergymen who remained had no bishops, and found it exceedingly difficult to secure any. The applications which were made to the hierarchy of England encountered many objections, and much delay. Tired out with these, Dr. Seabury of Connecticut, applied, at length, to the non-juring bishops of Scotland, and received consecration. After this, Dr. Provost, of New York, and Dr. White, of Philadelphia, renewed their application to the archbishop of Canterbury, and were successful. They were consecrated in the palace at Lambeth on the 4th of February, 1787.

Most of the mission churches, which were estab-

lished before the Revolution, were in Connecticut.

The principal church in Boston, and perhaps the first, was King's Chapel, established in 1686. Here the Provincial Governors of Massachusetts, the most of whom were Episcopalians, usually worshipped. This continued to be the principal church of the order in New England until the close of the Revolution,—when it fell into the hands of the Unitarians. The manner of its fall is worthy to be recorded. Dr. Freeman was employed as a reader at King's Chapel, in 1782 ; and for three years, he continued to use the liturgy of the Church of England, and to engage and lead in Trinitarian worship. But in 1785, when the minds of the people had been in a measure prepared for it, he effected a change. He introduced Dr. Clark's reformed liturgy, and the worship became such as a high Arian might consistently adopt. Dr. Freeman admits, in a letter to Mr. Lindsey, of London, that this was not such as he would prefer, but insists that it was all the people could be persuaded to adopt.

A difficulty still remained, as Mr. Freeman had not received ordination, and it was doubtful whether Episcopal ordination could be obtained for him. As this, however, was a point on which some of his hearers laid much stress, it was determined to make the attempt, and application was made by Mr. F., first to bishop Seabury, of

Connecticut, and afterwards to bishop Provost, of New York. In both these attempts he failed; and he was finally ordained (if ordination it could be called) by the wardens of his own church. The senior warden laid one hand upon him, and with the other delivered to him the Bible, charging him to make that sacred book the rule of his faith and conduct. Dr. F. thus became pastor of the church, and the first open and avowed preacher of Unitarianism in New England. There were numbers among the Congregational ministers of Boston and the vicinity who sympathized with him, but not one who dared, like him, to come out and make an open avowal of his sentiments.

The Episcopalians of this country, having received their bishops, and organized their Dioceses and Conventions, have lived in peace, and continued to prosper from the latter part of the last century to the present time. They have not increased like Methodists and Baptists, but have had a steady and substantial growth. They are found more in the cities than in the country. Together they constitute a large and highly respectable body of Christians.

Although the articles of the Episcopal church are Calvinistic, its clergy are supposed to be generally Arminian. The most marked division at present among them is into what is called "high church and low." The former class rest their form of church government and worship on a di-



vine authority, claiming for it the sanction of Scripture. They also lay great stress on the ritual observances of their church, imitating, in this respect, the church of Rome.

The other class of Episcopalians, though preferring their own forms of worship and government, do not claim for them all a Divine authority. They follow, in this respect, the fathers of the English church, and, like them, will not unchurch or disfellowship other denominations. They are thought, too, to be more evangelical than the other class, and to evince more of the life and spirit of religion. They engage with earnestness and success in the work of missions, and in all the great benevolent operations of the day.

### III. METHODISTS.

Methodist ministers had visited this country, previous to the war of the Revolution. In 1760, Philip Embury began to preach in New York; and at about the same time, Robert Strawbridge commenced his ministry in Frederic County, Maryland. In 1771, Francis Ashbury, afterwards a bishop, arrived in this country, prosecuting his labors chiefly in the South.

During the war of the Revolution, the Methodist preachers, who were here, were called to endure much hardship and persecution. The most of them were Englishmen, under the immediate



direction of Mr. Wesley, who was known to have taken sides against the Americans." The most of these preachers, in fact, were tories, and returned to England in the course of the war. When peace was declared, many came back and brought others with them; for in the Conference of 1783, there were no less than eighty-three ministers, and more than 13,000 members. Shortly after this, they received, at the hands of Mr. Wesley, their bishop, and established their church polity, much as it continues to the present day. The first General Conference was held in Baltimore, in 1792.

Up to the year 1789, there had never been a Methodist minister, or a Methodist church in all New England. In the spring of this year, Mr. Jesse Lee was appointed to a circuit in Connecticut; and on the first Sabbath in June, he preached his first sermon at Norwalk, standing under an apple tree by the side of the road. He had an audience of about twenty people. His second sermon was delivered at Fairfield, only a few miles distant, where he obtained the use of the court house, and had an audience of nearly forty.

During the summer of this year, Mr. Lee visited several places in Connecticut and Rhode Island; and in the spring of 1790, traveled into different parts of Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire. In the summer of this year,

he made his first visit to Boston. But not finding a place for meeting, he took his stand, on a fine summer afternoon, upon a table, under the great elm which stood upon the common. He first sang a hymn, which attracted the notice of several persons, who paused and listened to the song. He then knelt upon the table, and stretching forth his hands to heaven, he poured forth a prayer so loud and fervent, that it drew to him nearly all who were within the sound of his voice. He then opened his small pocket Bible, and discoursed to the assembled multitude with great unction and power. Some are said to have received permanent good impressions from the discourse, and many spoke of the preacher as a second Whitefield.

From Boston, Mr. Lee passed on through Salem to Newburyport, where he preached in the court house. From Newburyport, he visited several places in New Hampshire, and then returned to Boston, where he preached several times, — on the common, in private houses, and once in a Baptist church. At one of his meetings, on the common, he is said to have addressed five thousand people.

On returning to Boston the next year, he seems not to have been so favorably received. Finding no place open to him, he passed on to Lynn, where he was very kindly received, and spent some time in preaching and visiting from house to

house. From this time, Lynn seems to have been the center of Methodist influence for all New England.

For several years, Mr. Lee had his appointments in this section of the country. Others followed him, and labored under his directions, until he became the father of Methodism in New England.

From this small beginning, the Methodist church has extended itself into all parts of the country, until it has come to be, what it now is, a vast body of professed believers, outnumbering any other in the United States. Its rapid increase indicates very clearly, not only the skill and active energy of its ministers and members, but that it has shared abundantly in the favor and blessing of God.

In doctrine, the Methodist Episcopal church is Arminian, but warmly evangelical. It retains an amount of gospel truth sufficient to give it energy, life, and power. Its preachers proclaim the truth with great earnestness and zeal, accompanying it with effectual prayer; and the Spirit of God works with them, and by them, and makes them the instruments of salvation to many souls. In point of church order and government, the great body of our American Methodists are Episcopal, holding the three orders of ministers, but making no pretensions to an uninterrupted succession of bishops, in the high church Episcopalian sense.

They have their State Conferences which meet annually for the stationing of ministers, and the transaction of other necessary business ; are a delegated General Conference, which meets once in four years, in which all the State Conferences are represented. The centre of authority in this great church is chiefly with the bishops, and the Conferences. The laity are not overburthened with responsibility.

In the year 1830, there was a secession from the Methodist Episcopal church chiefly from the desire of a more popular government. The seceded body took the name of the Methodist Protestant church.

In 1842, there was another secession growing out of the anti-slavery agitation. The seceders, with others who joined them, held a Convention in Utica in 1843, and organized a separate body called the Wesleyan Methodist Convention.

In 1845, the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States was divided, in consequence of a disagreement on the subject of slavery. The Southern portion of the church including thirteen annual Conferences, withdrew, and formed a body by themselves, under the name of the Methodist Episcopal church South. This division has since been healed.

In the early days of the Methodist church in this country, their clergy, like those of the Baptists, were, — with a few notable exceptions, —

not men of enlarged or liberal education, but latterly, they have made a great advance in this respect. They now have their Colleges and Theological Schools, and most of their younger ministers are pretty thoroughly educated.

Together, our Methodist brethren constitute a noble band of evangelical laborers, deeply interested in the cause of missions, and in every other benevolent work earnestly striving,—in connection with their brethren of other denominations,—to usher in the predicted day, when the whole earth shall be given to Christ, and all flesh shall see of his salvation.

#### IV. UNITARIANS.

Unitarianism in New England originated in a re-action from the great revival of 1740. The opponents of that revival, in and around Boston, relapsed, first, into a cold, unevangelical Arminianism, next, into high Arianism, or semi-Arianism using, all the while an orthodox phraseology, and avoiding any avowal of their real sentiments. Quite a number of Congregational ministers were Unitarians of this stamp, before the close of the last century. By pursuing this ambiguous underground policy, they got possession of nearly all the old Puritan churches in and around Boston, many of which had valuable funds and other property which had been given for the support of a Puritan gospel.

They got possession, too, of Harvard University, with all its funds and means of influence.

This policy of concealment, persisted in by American Unitarians, had long been disapproved by the Unitarians of England, who at length, took effectual means to expose and correct it. In his memoirs of Lindsey, published in London in 1812, Mr. Belsham devoted a whole chapter to publishing extracts of letters from distinguished Unitarians in this country, giving an account of American Unitarianism. The Memoir soon found its way across the water, and, though studiously kept out of circulation for about two years, it fell at length into the hands of those who were disposed to make the proper use of it. The chapter on American Unitarianism was published in a pamphlet by itself, and a spirited review of it, written by the late Jeremiah Everts, was given in the "Panoplist" for June, 1815. This introduced the controversy between Doctors Worcester and Channing, and compelled Unitarians to take a stand before the public—a thing which they were very unwilling to do, and, from the consequences of which, they have never recovered.

The controversy thus introduced was carried on briskly for the next ten or fifteen years. Professors Stuart and Woods published largely on the Orthodox side and Dr. Ware of Cambridge on the other. In 1828, an orthodox periodical—the Spirit of the Pilgrims—was instituted, for the ex-



press purpose of exposing and refuting the prevailing Unitarianism ; which was opposed by the *Christian Examiner*, and other periodicals, on the other side. The controversey waxed warm for the next four or five years ; but at length, the Unitarians became tired of it ; they began to lament over the evils of controversy, and to sigh for the return of that peace which had been so rudely assailed.

Meanwhile a separation had been effected in the old Congregational body, and the Unitarians had become organized as a community by themselves. The American Unitarian Association was formed in 1825, and incorporated in 1844. Since that time, there has been little or no fellowship between the two bodies, — each being left to pursue its own course without interference.

Various changes have come over the Unitarian body within the last thirty or forty years. In general, they have declined, in point of religious character and influence. They have not increased in members in any proportion as have the Orthodox. At present, they are divided into about three classes. One class, — I fear not a large one, — have been rising in religious sentiment and feeling, are regarded as evangelical, and orthodox ministers have fellowship with them. The second class, who may be styled “ Old School Unitarians,” claim to agree with the late Dr. Channing and others of his time. The third class, including, probably,



most of the young and active ministers, have become Socinians of the lowest order, and radicals in their views of the Bible and of religion generally. Some have laid aside the Christian sacraments, and even the Christian name.

The Unitarians of New England are generally a learned class of men, of good moral character and of high standing in society ; but are not in a situation to exert a strong religious influence any way. Their position, in this respect, is well described by one of their own writers, " Liberal Christianity is a strange jumble of real truth, and arbitrary assertions—rational doctrines conjured from irrational premises, and irrational doctrines tortured from rational premises. It coquets with Calvinism on the one hand, and rationalism on the other. It undertakes to reconcile irreconcilable ideas, and disowns the inevitable consequences of the principles it ostensibly defends." This writer compares Unitarianism to "a wood pile and not a ship," and says: "To launch its loose planks on the stormy sea of human thought is to embark on a heap of boards for a cruise around the world." \*

#### V. UNIVERSALISTS.

There may have been individuals in this country who believed in the final salvation of all men, as long ago as the middle of the last century ; but no

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\*Christian Examiner for March 1866, pp. 262, 265.

direct efforts were made to propagate the doctrine before the arrival of John Murray, in the year 1770, Hence he has been called the father of Universalism in America. He preached in several places, and in face of much opposition, for a number of years ; but at length settled down at Gloucester, Mass., in the autumn of 1774. Here he formed a society, a meeting-house was built for him, and he entered upon a regular course of ministerial labor. He was soon joined by other preachers, as Elhanan Winchester, Adam Streeter, &c.

The first Convention of Universalist ministers was held at Oxford, Mass., in 1785. The denomination was now organized, and entered on the work of propagating their peculiar sentiments with zeal and success. Societies were formed in several places in Massachusetts. The Society in Boston purchased the meeting-house which had before been occupied by Rev. Samuel Mather, son of Cotton Mather.

The Universalists of New England, though united in the conclusion that all men would finally be saved, have come to this conclusion by different ways,—so different as to constitute distinct systems of theology. The first preachers of the doctrine were Trinitarians. They believed in the Divinity and atonement of Christ, and grounded their Universalism on the universality of the atonement. Their theology was that of Remy, who thought that all men are so united to Christ, that his death

has cancelled the claims of the law for them all, and that all will, at length, be forever united to him in heaven. If any fail to embrace Christ by faith in this life, they must suffer hereafter till they do embrace him ; but all will, at length, be gathered in. Mr. Kelly was, for years, one of Whitefield's preachers in England ; and the same is true of Murray, Winchester, and several others. This form of Universalism prevailed in this country for many years, and is the only form which, under the name of Universalism, has prevailed in England to the present time.

Early in the present century, we began to hear of Rev. Hosea Ballou as a leader among American Universalists. His life's labors in the denomination were long. He was, for many years, settled in Boston ; and through his influence a great change came over the sentiments of the denomination. He discarded the idea of Christ's Divinity and atonement, and also of a future retribution. He thought that all men were sinners, more or less, and that all suffer, in this life, the full reward of their deeds. The present life is a state, not of probation, but of righteous retribution ; and when we close our eyes in death, our sufferings are all ended. We begin anew in the other world ; all stand alike on the same footing ; and that world is to all men a state of happiness. Mr. Ballou encountered opposition, for a time, from some of the older and more serious Universalists ; but he was a plausible

man, his influence was great, and he succeeded, before his death, in bringing about the entire denomination to an acceptance of his views.

This doctrine was not favorable to the religious character of the denomination, and Mr. Ballou had not long been dead, when a disposition was manifested to return to something like the old Rellian doctrine. At present, the Universalists in New England are believers, not in the Divinity and atonement of Christ, but in a future state of rewards and punishments. The punishments of the other life will not indeed be endless. They are disciplinary in their nature and character, and will sooner or later result in the recovery of all men to the love and favor of God. As soon as individuals are recovered, they will be relieved from suffering, and ultimately all will be united in heaven. The theory is one of *universal restoration*. This doctrine is not only more plausible than that of Mr. Ballou, but is of vastly better influence on the character and life. Under the operation of it, the Universalists of this country have come to be a much more serious, religious people. This is true, at least, of many of them. Some of their ministers preach seriously, I had almost said evangelically; they have churches as well as societies, and observe the ordinances of the gospel. They are becoming better educated than formerly. They have their colleges and institutions of learning. They are a numerous and increasing body of professed believ-

ers in Christ ; and in regard to the authority and inspiration of the Bible, are far ahead of the radical Unitarians. May the Spirit of God guide them into all truth, sanctify them under its influence, and make them a blessing to the world.

#### VI. ROMAN CATHOLICS.

The first Roman Catholics in New England were the Penobscot and Quoddy tribes of Indians. They were converted by French Catholic missionaries—probably Jesuits—in the early days of our country's history. They still have their churches and priests, and are good Catholics to the present time.

There was a small Catholic mission in Boston near the close of the last century ; but active efforts for the establishment of Popery can hardly be said to have commenced, before the arrival of Father Cheverus, in the year 1795. Cheverus was born at Mayence, in France, in 1768. He was a remarkable man, and a remarkable career of success was before him. He was admitted to the priesthood in 1790, and officiated for some time as a curate in his native place. But owing to political troubles growing out of the French revolution, he left his country, and took refuge in England. Here, he taught the French language and mathematics in a private Protestant school. In 1795, he came to the United States, and joined

the Catholic mission in Boston. There were but few Catholics in Boston at that time; but by his winning manners and popular eloquence, he succeeded in gathering new adherents. He did not confine his labors to Boston, but visited the Catholic Indians in Maine, and established a small church at Newcastle, in that Province. On his return to Boston, he became so popular, and his followers so much increased, that he took measures for the building of a church. On his opening a subscription for this purpose, President John Adams headed the list, and many Protestants followed his example. The church of the Holy Cross in Franklin Place was erected in 1803; and five years later, Cheverus was constituted first bishop of Boston, by Pope Pius VII.

His elevation did not change his course of life. He dwelt in a small scantily furnished room, where he was always ready to receive those who needed assistance or spiritual consultation. He repeated his visits every year to the Catholic Indians in Maine.

Bishop Cheverus continued in Boston about thirty years, and became the father and founder of the Catholic interest in that city. He was recalled to France in 1823, by Louis XVIII., who appointed him bishop of Montauban. He afterwards was archbishop of Bordeaux, and at length became a Cardinal, and a peer of France.

From such small beginnings under bishop



Cheverus, the Catholic interest has mightily increased, and spread itself far and wide over New England, and indeed over this whole land. It has its bishops in all the States, and churches in most of our cities and larger villages.

This increase, however, has been occasioned, not by the conversion of native citizens, but chiefly by emigration. It will be easily accounted for, when it is remembered that within the last fifty years, we have received not less than eight or nine millions of emigrants from Ireland, and other Catholic countries of Europe. The officers and members of our numerous Catholic churches are, with few exceptions, foreigners.

The Roman Catholics in this country are, for the most part, a quiet, industrious, thriving people. They have no difficulty with the government, and make no attempts at persecution. But as their leaders profess to be infallible, they are constrained to approve of the terrible persecutions of former times. And not only so, but some of these leaders acknowledge that, with a change of circumstances, they might be constrained to repeat their persecutions here. They have not the power to attempt anything of the kind at present ; but were they to come, as they expect, into the possession of absolute power, "they would feel impelled, by a religious obligation, to persecute and destroy every thing which opposed itself to the holy Catholic church."



When we listen to such avowals, and consider that those who make them are but speaking the consistent results of their own principles, and remember further that our country is the rendezvous of a multitude of wily Jesuits, who are seeking to profit by every occurring change, we can but feel the importance of unceasing watchfulness, lest our beloved country become, at some time, like the desolate villages of the Waldenses and Albigenes of Italy and France.











